

# CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

Suite 840 50 West Kellogg Blvd. Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102 www.stpaul.gov/parks Telephone: 651-266-6400 Facsimile: 651-292-7405

## MEETING NOTES FURNESS PARKWAY PATH EXTENSIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Community Meeting February 17, 2009 Hayden Heights Recreation Center Brian C. Tourtelotte, Landscape Architect

## I. Project overview

- A. Funded by City's Capital Improvement Budget program from bond sales, not from the general budget. There is no spending connection to jobs. Funded in parts over 3 years: 2006, 2007, and 2009.
- B. Includes: extension of the pathways to complete the 16 blocks from Larpenteur to Maryland; lighting the length for safety; fencing where appropriate at adjacent private properties; benches and trash receptacles, crosswalks at Arlington and Sherwood; and tree planting, sod and seed as needed.

### II. Brief History of the Parkway

- A. Originally a street car line that went from Saint Paul to Mahtomedi
- B. Obtained by the City in 1955 for street purposes; 100 ft. wide from the railroad south of Maryland to Larpenteur
- C. 1963 City took 40 ft. each side of right-of-way for 'Curve Street', now known as Furness Parkway, from Ivy to Larpenteur
- D. 1978 the Furness Parkway old street car right-of-way (100 ft. wide from Maryland to Larpenteur) was transferred to Parks and Recreation "for walking and bicycle paths."
- E. In the early 1980's a series of projects by Parks and Rec built the trails from Ivy to Hoyt, did site grading and cleanup from Maryland to Ivy, constructed bench sites and a memorial plaque, and did a tree planting project.
- F. In 2006 the existing pathways were renovated and repaved.

## III. Pathway Design

- A. The design is now standardized in conformance with national (AASHTO) standards.
- B. This path is classified as a neighborhood connector, shared pathway, low volume.
- C. Standard design width is 10 ft. (minimum).
- D. Where possible, street crossings will be at corner intersections; these include Ivy and Luella, and Maryland and Hazel. Mid-block crossings will require signage to stop on the path, and warn the vehicles of a crossing point; no crosswalk striping will be included as the traffic engineer says that is less safe.
- E. No slopes on the path over 8% grade.





- F. Additional work is likely where the Hoyt Avenue right-of-way crosses the parkway, using curbs, bollards, and signage, to deter vehicles from driving onto and over the pathways. Similar treatments may also be used on Hazel Street right-of-way south of Maryland.
- G. The alignment will meander through the parkway similar to the existing, except that we will only construct one 10 ft. wide path instead of 2 separate paths.
- H. No tree removal will be done for the pathway except in the narrow section from Idaho Ave. to California Ave. In that area, protecting a group of large Cottonwood trees requires removing 2 smaller Cottonwoods, and a number of larger Black Locust trees north of the Cottonwoods. The Black Locust trees are a prolific invasive species that we desire to remove from this area.
- I. For personal safety of the path users, we will remove small volunteer trees (under 8 inch diameter) and prune some lower branches as needed to increase visibility of spaces around the pathway. All Oak trees will be protected.
- J. There was opposition from some individuals to proceeding with any path development. However, general support was very strong. The District 2 Comm. Council has promoted this work for at least 20 years, has publicized it in their newsletter at least every 2 years, and has included it in their area plan which was debated at the community level with significant input. Funding of this project represents years of hard work and energy, and overwhelming support of the community and political factions. The project will be discussed at the Community Council meeting Feb. 18, 2009 for acceptance to proceed.

## IV. Lighting, Fences, Benches, and Trees

- A. Lighting will increase personal safety of the path users. The style of lights is the old classic lantern poles used throughout the City. These poles are about 13 ft. tall. There are two lights we can chose:
- B. The Sun Valley fixture is a high-pressure sodium light, a pinkish white light. The light is pleasantly cast around the fixture, and tends to be a soft glow, spilling onto the surrounding trees. These can be spaced about 120 ft. apart, and light cast is 50 60 ft., but you will walk in and out of light.
- C. The Holophane fixture is what Public Works uses on their street lighting recently done in this area. It has the same light source, but has a lense that focuses the light into a more direct light. It does a better job of lighting, and is spaced about 150 ft. apart. The light is brighter, and can get in your eyes, but will do a better job of lighting the people. It does not cast light generally that lights the trees, but you are very aware of being in the light and out of the light.
- D. Concern expressed is that people may now get light into their yards/houses from pathway lighting. People can benefit from this, or be bothered by this, depending on the viewpoint. Little can be done to cut off any of the light cast from these fixtures. A straw vote on fixture choice was unanimous for the Sun Valley units.
- E. Fencing at the property lines will help Parks maintenance crews recognize the maintenance areas. It also may serve as a "Good Neighbor" mark for the limits of the park space, but some owners may prefer no fence on their yard. The style may not be appealing to some owners. Three options for fencing style were presented: split rail type, turned rail type, and board rail type. All these maintain an open feel with good visibility, and will not provide barrier to children or pets. If no fence is desired, the alternative is marking the property corners with a visible marker.

- F. Discussion on fencing generally supported the turned rail fence as the compromise position between rustic and formal styles. There was support for allowing the owners to accept this fence constructed by Parks, or chose to only have the property corner markers instead. <u>It was decided to allow each property owner to decide which alternative to accept;</u> this represents a compromise position.
- G. Several bench style alternatives were shown. It was noted that the District 2 Community Council had adopted one style of bench for the district, in black color, and it is used in several places including Hillcrest Knoll Park. Parks will use that style and color for Furness Parkway, unless the Council desires a change.
- H. Bench and trash receptacle possible locations were discussed. Two existing locations will have the units replaced with new ones. A location in the northern 4 blocks was decided to be at the end of the trail at Larpenteur, and would be styled like a trail-ending node. A location in the southern 4 blocks was selected to be near Orange Ave., and will be located as a node off the path, but close enough to Orange for good visibility.
- I. Tree work will be partially under direction by the City Foresters. They will walk the parkway and determine pruning and removal recommendations for tree health. The work will be done with this project. In the southern 4 blocks most of the trees are volunteer (self-seeded) trees, and their health and form are sometimes questionable.
- J. Tree planting will include planting of areas not previously done in a similar fashion. This will result in some planted and some open areas. In addition, fill-in planting will be done in some areas where we have lost trees or where removals will happen.
- K. Cross-walks are specifically part of the project on both sides of Arlington Ave., and the south side of Sherwood Ave. These will extend across the parkway.

#### V. Other Concerns and Comments

- A. Concern was expressed about undesirable activities, including drinking, littering, and vandalism that has occurred along the parkway. While some feel that a new trail will increase the problem by inviting more people into the area, others felt that the increase trail use will be a deterrent to these activities.
- B. Concern was expressed that lighting, especially where the corridor is near their yards, will invade their private space and be undesirable. Others expressed the idea that parts of the parkway are quite dark, and that lighting will be necessary for safe use of the trail. In addition, they stated that it may be a deterrent to the overall crime level near the parkway.
- C. Concern was expressed that the traffic on Larpenteur at the path termination, including the vehicular traffic level, speed, and hill on either side, will be a safety issue for children. Parks is working with Public Works traffic engineer on the street crossing locations for safety designs. Contact has been made with Maplewood as well to discuss this location. Actions may be recommended to increase safety at that intersection. However, it is also noted that normal parental control of small children be exercised on the trails, especially at the Larpenteur end.
- D. Comment was offered that some residents frequently use the parkway, both where paths exist and where they don't, for walking, and they look forward to completion of this project.